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16 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: MONGOOSE Meeting with the Attorney General

1. At 2:30 this afternoon, the Attorney General convened in his office a meeting on Operation MONGOOSE consisting of General Lansdale and Colonel Patchell, General Johnson of the Joint Staff, Robert Hurwitch of State (vice Ed Martin who was unable to attend), Hewson Ryan of USIA, and the undersigned.

2. The Attorney General opened the meeting by expressing the "general dissatisfaction of the President" with Operation MONGOOSE. He pointed out that the Operation had been under way for a year, that the results were discouraging, that there had been no acts of sabotage, and that even the one which had been attempted had failed twice. He indicated that there had been noticeable improvement during the year in the collection of intelligence but that other actions had failed to influence significantly the course of events in Cuba. He spoke of the weekly meetings of top officials on this problem and again noted the small accomplishments despite the fact that Secretaries Rusk and McNamara, General Taylor, McGeorge Bundy, and he personally had all been charged by the President with finding a solution. He traced the history of General Lansdale's personal appointment by the President a year ago. The Attorney General then stated that in view of this lack of progress, he was going to give Operation MONGOOSE more personal attention. In order to do this, he will hold a meeting every morning at 0930 with the MONGOOSE operational representatives from the various agencies (Lansdale, Harvey, Hurwitch, Ryan, and General Johnson).

3. The Attorney General spoke favorably of the sabotage paper which had been presented by General Carter this morning to the meeting of the Special Group (Augmented). He obviously did not like the earlier memorandum, since he felt it showed no "push" in getting on with the acts of sabotage.

4. When asked for my comments, I stated that we were prepared to get on with the new action program and that we would execute it aggressively. I pointed out, however, that the objective of Operation MONGOOSE would have to be determined at some point since the Cubans

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with whom we have to work were seeking a reason for risking their lives in these operations. I related my conversation with the young Cuban from the DRE who pointed out that they were willing to commit their people only on operations which they regarded as sensible. I defined "sensible" in Cuban terminology these days as meaning an action which would contribute to the liberation of their country, another way of saying that the United States, perhaps in conjunction with other Latin countries, would bail them out militarily. My point was specifically echoed by Hewson Ryan. The Attorney General's rejoinder was a plea for new ideas of things that could be done against Cuba. In passing, he made reference to the change in atmosphere in the United States Government during the last twenty-four hours, and asked some questions about the percentage of Cubans whom we thought would fight for the regime if the country were invaded.

5. The meeting concluded with the reaffirmation by the Attorney General of his desire to hold a meeting each day, beginning tomorrow. He said that these meetings might later be changed to every other day when and if he finds a daily get-together is not necessary. The meetings are to last no more than one-half hour.

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Richard Helms
Deputy Director (Plans)

Distribution: ✓

Original - Mr. Elder for the DCI and DDCI
1 cc - Chief, TFW
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